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April 24, 2001

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FCC MAIL ROOM

The Honorable Michael K. Powell
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

SUBJECT: WT Docket No. 00-32

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing you on behalf of the Parker Fire Protection District to express our concern about the FCC's intention to auction 50 MHz of spectrum in the 4940-4990 MHz (4.9 GHz) band, rather than allocating this critically needed spectrum to public safety for new broadband public safety applications.

The Parker Fire Protection District serves a population of 60,000 people in portions of two counties and four municipalities. We currently operate five stations covering 105 square miles. Back in 1996, the public safety community identified the need for 95 MHz of additional spectrum to meet our communications needs over the next ten years. Of this amount, the greatest need will be for advanced wideband and broadband technologies. To date, the FCC has allocated 24 MHz to public safety users in the new 746 MHz band. There are new emerging broadband technologies and applications appearing on the horizon that will require significantly wider bandwidths than this allocation.

Solutions such as personal area networks (PAN) can wirelessly integrate a variety of lifesaving tools into the firefighter's suit and helmet. These include biometric and environmental sensors, 3D location, video and thermal imaging cameras, wireless microphones and earpieces, and voice recognition to allow complete hands-free and wire-free operation of all communications. High speed wireless data links transmit this vital information to fire ground command centers, allowing them to constantly monitor the location and vital signs of all firefighters and help them navigate through smoke-filled burning buildings. These technologies could provide a critical link for quickly locating disoriented or downed firefighters before fatal injuries are sustained. Very large data and image files can be rapidly and wirelessly transferred within Wireless Local Area Networks (WLAN), enabling graphics such as maps, images and building blueprints to be downloaded into fire vehicle mobile computers as they leave the

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The Honorable Michael K. Powell
April 24, 2001
Page Two

firehouse. WLAN technology will also enable fire ground command centers to employ full motion video for remote controlled robotics in intense fires, hazardous material and bomb disposal, and dangerous search and rescue operations. This technology would allow real time transmission of video and imagery from aircraft to fire ground commanders.

Although unlicensed consumer oriented broadband technologies are on the horizon in the nearby 5 GHz band, public safety agencies cannot rely on unlicensed spectrum for our mission critical applications. We must have dedicated spectrum and systems that assure the safety of our personnel via immediate priority access, uninterrupted transmissions, and guaranteed coverage and reliability. The proximity of this unlicensed band to the proposed public safety 4.9 GHz allocation allows us to leverage such standards based broadband technologies and yet have the dedicated, reliable, secure and enhanced featured broadband solutions that we require for our mission critical applications.

The Parker Fire Protection District, Parker, Colorado, urges you and the Commission to recognize our broadband spectrum needs and allocate this much needed 4.9 GHz band to the public safety community. Obtaining this spectrum is a critical step for public safety agencies such as ours to access these new advanced broadband solutions for our mission critical applications.

Sincerely,



Daniel H. Qualman
Fire Chief

DQ/tt

cc: Office of the Secretary
Ms. Magalie Roman Sallas
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554